

17th Annual TLC Conference at Andrews University

"Creating Communities of Learning: Connecting, Engaging, Belonging"

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Gunnar Lovhoiden, professor of engineering at Andrews University and recipient of the 2018 Andrews University Daniel A. Augsburger Excellence in Teaching Award, during his morning keynote address (Photo by Jessica Condon, University Communication student photographer)

By: Hannah Gallant, University Communication student writer

On Thursday, March 28, approximately 150 people attended the 17th annual Andrews University Teaching and Learning Conference (AUTLC) on the campus of Andrews University. Hosted by the Andrews University Department of Teaching, Learning & Curriculum and Berrien Springs Public Schools, AUTLC gives educators a chance to share reports of significant work or integrative reviews in theory, research, development, applications and societal issues related to all aspects of education. This year's conference theme was "Creating Communities of Learning: Connecting, Engaging, Belonging."

The day began in Newbold Auditorium, Buller Hall, with a morning keynote delivered by Gunnar Lovhoiden, professor of engineering at Andrews University and recipient of the 2018 Andrews University Daniel A. Augsburger Excellence in Teaching Award. His address was titled "My Journey and Commitment to Undergraduate Education at Andrews University

and How My Teaching Practices Foster Connection, Engagement, and Belonging.” After sharing some of his life experiences prior to his time at Andrews, Lovhoiden addressed how he tries to engage and connect with the students in his classes. He also talked about how he has been working with Wayne Buckhanan, associate professor of engineering at Andrews University, to make changes in the curriculum to better serve engineering students and provide them with a more holistic education. “Once we started talking about how to help our students, people came out of the woodwork,” he said. Lovhoiden ended his keynote by admitting that his work with Buckhanan had not only helped the students but had also helped him feel like he belonged more than ever before.

Next, attendees gathered in the Buller Hall lobby for a poster session and lunch. A full list of the poster session participants and topics is available [here](#).

After the poster session, 25 afternoon breakout sessions gave attendees the opportunity to learn about numerous topics including library practices, technology tools, brain strategies, student mental health, the benefits of undergraduate research experiences, trauma-informed student care, generating critical thinking, and the development of internationally-minded students. A full list of the breakout session topics and participants is available [here](#).

In the evening, attendees gathered again in Newbold Auditorium to hear Frank Tuitt, senior advisor to the chancellor and provost on Diversity and Inclusion, University of Denver, deliver his keynote address titled “Making Excellence Inclusive in Challenging Times: Diversity Considerations for K–20 Classrooms and Beyond.” Tuitt began his address by sharing about his own experiences as a student at Harvard University. “I felt like a guest in somebody else’s house. I didn’t see pictures on the wall that reflected my experiences,” he said. This lack of representation was one of many things that caused Tuitt to ask more questions and dedicate his professional career to creating more inclusive learning environments. He then shared some of the best practices that institutions can use to develop this type of learning environment and care for the souls of their students. Ultimately, Tuitt called the audience to remember that creating inclusive educational environments requires systematic commitment, courage and grace at an institutional level. “This work requires continuous interrogation of the things that we’re doing,” he explained.

Following Tuitt’s keynote address, the conference ended with a brief fireside chat and book signing for Tuitt’s recent book, “Race, Equity, and the Learning Environment.”

“AUTLC serves as a forum to support excellent teaching and learning practice and scholarship. The diversity and inclusion theme prominently connected the keynote speeches, the poster session and the breakout sessions. We ultimately all work to ensure that every student feels that they belong in our classrooms,” says Anneris Coria-Navia, associate professor of curriculum & instruction and director of the Center for Teaching & Learning Excellence at Andrews University. “Our goal is to continue to provide a space for K–20 educators to do rigorous scholarship in teaching and learning, to network, to collaborate, and to feel supported.”

The next Andrews University Teaching and Learning Conference will take place on March 26, 2020. All are welcome to consider attending or presenting a proposal